

Message Text

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21

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 OMB-01 AF-08 MMO-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15

PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 /071 W

----- 011863

R 061015Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6686

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

MAC SCOTT AFB

CSAF WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

CINCPACFLT

CINCUSNAVEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 5477

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, SOPN, XO, UK

SUBJECT: DIEGO GARCIA MEDIA VISIT

REFS: STATE 293579 (NOTAL)

1. IT IS POSSIBLE USE OF SINGAPORE AS TRANSIT STOP
COULD AROUSE MEDIA INTEREST IN SINGAPORE FACILITIES AND
GENERATE UNHELPFUL QUESTIONS CONCERNING MAC FLIGHTS OR
POSSIBLE P-3 FLIGHTS TO DIEGO GARCIA VIA SINGAPORE. HOW-
EVER, ANY AVOIDANCE OF SINGAPORE WOULD SEEM UNUSUAL, AND
MIGHT ALSO GENERATE UNDESIRABLE SPECULATION. MOREOVER, WHETHER
FLIGHT STOPS IN SINGAPORE OR NOT, CORRESPONDENTS ARE LIKELY
HEAR ABOUT USE OF SINGAPORE AS A TRANSIT STOP IN EITHER
MANILA OR DIEGO GARCIA. THEREFORE, SUBJECT TO GOS APPROVAL
EMBASSY IS WILLING TO ACCEPT USE OF SINGAPORE AS A
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TRANSIT STOP PROVIDED CINCPAC HAS NO OBJECTION. EMBASSY

WILL DISCUSS THIS WITH ADMIRAL WEISNER DURING HIS VISIT
HERE DECEMBER 7.

2. HOWEVER, EMBASSY DOES NOT CONCUR IN TIMING OF VISIT
WHICH NOW APPEARS LIKELY TO FALL IN MIDDLE OF SINGAPORE'S
NATIONAL ELECTION. GOS HAS NOT YET ANNOUNCED DATE OF
ELECTION, AND IT NOW APPEARS LIKELY IT WILL BE HELD IN
MID-JANUARY. ACCORDING REFTEL TRANSIT STOP IN SINGAPORE
SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 7-8. WORKERS PARTY HAS ALREADY
CRITICIZED GOS POLICY FOR ADVOCATING THAT US KEEP SUFFICIENT
FORCE IN AREA TO MAINTAIN BALANCE OF POWER IN INDIAN
OCEAN, AND MIGHT EXPLOIT FOR PARTISAN PURPOSES ANY
PUBLICITY CONCERNING USE OF SINGAPORE AS A TRANSIT POINT
FOR U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT TRAVELLING TO DIEGO GARCIA.
THEREFORE, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS MEDIA VISIT BE SCHEDULED A
WEEK OR TWO AFTER THE ELECTION.

3. DECISION TO LIMIT REPRESENTATION TO U.S. AND U.K.
MEDIA ONLY WILL COME AS MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT TO AUSTRALIAN
PRESS HERE, ESPECIALLY BRUCE WILSON OF THE MELBOURNE HERALD
AND MICHAEL RICHARDSON OF THE MELBOURNE AGE WHO HAVE ASKED
TO BE INCLUDED IN ANY SUCH VISIT SINCE 1974. (EMBASSY
COMMENT: IN VIEW OF CURRENT GOA SUPPORT FOR OUR INDIAN
OCEAN POLICY, SUGGEST IT MAY BE IN OUR INTEREST TO INCLUDE
SOME AUSTRALIAN CORRESPONDENTS.)
HOLDRIDGE

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